

Cohabitation
Oakwood Christian Church Position Paper
January 2016



Oakwood Christian Church considers the Bible the inspired Word of God and therefore our guide in matters of sex and marriage. The Bible says that the only proper place for sexual expression is marriage (Exodus 20:14; Deut. 22:21-22; Heb. 13:4). Marriage is defined as being between a man and a woman who have committed to a lifelong relationship (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6). Any sexual relationship outside of marriage – whether premarital, extramarital or homosexual – God calls sin. Therefore, Oakwood Christian Church does not condone a church member to live with someone to whom he or she is not married when such a relationship could result in the temptation to sexual sin or the appearance to others that a sexual relationship exists.

Even when a cohabiting relationship is intended to be platonic, we would advise against an unmarried, unrelated man and woman living together. (Likewise those tempted toward homosexuality would be wise not to cohabit with those of the same sex and should instead elect to live alone or with close family members.) It is our position that a heterosexual cohabiting relationship, even when celibacy is intended, invites too much temptation (1 Cor. 6:18), and does not properly avoid the “appearance of evil” (1 Thes. 5:22, KJV).

Cohabiting couples are welcomed to attend services at Oakwood Christian Church. When someone in an inappropriate cohabiting relationship expresses a desire to commit to Christ a minister, elder or deacon will interview the individual to determine if the candidate sincerely wants to make changes in their life and accept Christ. If the candidate is found sincerely interested in change they will be allowed to be baptized, but membership will be withheld until they are separated or until a marital commitment is complete. Any person willing to refrain from inappropriate cohabiting and commit to sexual purity can be accepted into membership. If an Oakwood member is found to be in an inappropriate cohabiting relationship, he or she will be asked to separate himself or herself from the relationship by taking residence elsewhere until marriage. Any cohabiting couple desiring to be married at Oakwood or by one of the Oakwood ministers will likewise be instructed to separate until the wedding ceremony. Holy matrimony is God’s design. We will adhere to the Bible and uphold His standards for the union that He created between a man and a woman.